DRiVER

JANUARY 1978

MOTOCROSS

SAFETY GEAR

WET BLANKETS

DRiVER

A fire extinguisher
is an investment in fire-proofing
your car

WET BLANKETS

A fire extinguisher. Probably something you've never thought about putting in your car. Most people wouldn't think of it. A car fire doesn't sound like that likely an occurrence. Yet the National Fire Protection Association reports an estimated 492,900 vehicle fires in 1976. That's about three fires for every thousand vehicles, based on the National Safety Council's figure of 142 million vehicles registered in the U.S.

That still may not sound very bad. But that three in a thousand could include you, or someone you know, just as easily as anyone else. And if your car turned into something to roast marshmallows on, in the garage or on the highway after an accident, the statistics wouldn't mean a whole lot, right? If it's *your* car, it's one out of one.

We're not going to tell you specifically what to buy because we don't know what your particular needs are. But, in general, we think you need some sort of fire protection in your car. An extinguisher can protect your car, and possibly save a life.

An inexpensive extinguisher can provide a little extra insurance in addition to your automobile insurance policy – remember the latter is good only *after* a fire has destroyed your investment. You can minimize or eliminate an expensive repair bill by using a fire extinguisher.

They really aren't that expensive. A good unit can be purchased for under $20 – cheap insurance by any standards. But even if that doesn't impress you, think of it this way: Expense is relative. Weigh the cost of one of these little fire-snuffers against the cost of your stereo tape player or your CB radio, or just against the cost of your car itself and its brand-new paint job. Taken that way, it begins to look better, and cheaper.

Or you may have special needs. Take as a f'rinstance: those of you who have jacked up the rear ends of your cars. We don't mean to single you guys out as bad guys (although we wish you wouldn't do it) – it's just that this is one way to increase the fire risk in a car. In the event of the most common type of accident, the rear-end collision, jacking up the rear exposes the gas tank to more damage – and gas burns, you know. Obviously, DRIVER doesn't recommend this kind of alteration to the car's suspension. But sweethearts that we are, we just want to keep you around to read us.

"Okay, okay!" you say. "You've convinced me. I'll go get one."

But wait a minute. There are a few things you should know about them before you go and shell out your hard-earned green for one. There are different types and sizes of extinguishers, and they're pretty easy to remember. Again, we won't tell you specifically what to get – we're just doin' a little educatin'.

If you haven't thought about them, you won't know how to go about looking for one. (All fire extinguisher experts can go look at Timely

continued

DRIVER

THE
TRAFFIC SAFETY MAGAZINE
FOR THE MILITARY DRIVER

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HQ AIR FORCE INSPECTION AND SAFETY CENTER
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Certain individuals shown in this magazine are not members of the Air Force and therefore do not conform to Air Force grooming standards.

JAN

VOLUME 11 NUMBER 8

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THE EDITOR SPEAKS DOUBLE CLUTCH

DRUNK OR STONED, OR BOTH?

Articles about alcohol or marijuana always bring us a lot of letters from readers. What intrigues us is that almost everybody admits that alcohol has a bad effect on driving, but almost nobody believes pot does.

Traffic police have long known that marijuana does indeed cause trouble on the road. They suspect that many motorists stopped for drunken or erratic driving, but who easily pass sobriety tests, are actually under the influence of marijuana. But suspicion is not proof.

Last April the California Justice Department and the state Office of Traffic Safety launched an experiment to discover the incidence of marijuana use by drivers suspected of being intoxicated. Initial results of this first-ever test have surprised almost everyone. *More than one in five* California motorists stopped for drunk driving have marijuana in their blood, sometimes in combination with alcohol and sometimes not. Officials say that as more blood is sampled the incidence rate will jump to one in four.

Many of the blood samples containing marijuana have come from well-educated, middle-income motorists in their 30s—another surprise to the researchers. At least 1,800 blood samples will be analyzed before the test is completed next spring. Eventually, California may enact a law prescribing a limit at which a person is presumed to be legally under the influence of marijuana. No doubt other states would follow.

(left) A fire extinguisher with this designation can be used on all three classes of fires that may happen in your car—ordinary combustibles (A), flammable liquids (B), and electrical equipment (C). **(right)** If it says this, the cylinder is safe to use on Class A fires, but won't have enough agent to control them.

Topics or something. The rest of you, follow me.)

Learn Your A-B-Cs: Basically, there are three types of fire extinguishers you should be familiar with. These correspond to the three types of fires you could have to fight.

Class A – This is for ordinary combustibles, like paper, cloth, wood, upholstery, and things like that. The letter "A" will be in a triangle, which, if colored, will be green. This type of extinguisher will be water or loaded-stream (potassium acetate in a non-freezing water solution), or possibly a multi-purpose dry chemical, or Halon 1211, that could be used on the other types of fires.

Class B – This is for flammable liquids, like gasoline, oil, grease or fat. The letter "B" will be in a square, possibly colored red. The extinguisher will contain a dry chemical agent, carbon dioxide, or loaded-stream.

Class C – This is for electrical equipment. The letter "C" will be in a circle, possibly colored blue. This type of extinguisher will be dry chemical or carbon dioxide.

There is a fourth class of fires, Class D, for combustible metals like magnesium or titanium. The "D" on the container will be in a yellow star. The agent will most often be a dry powder in a pail or drum and is shovelled on the fire. Unless you have true mag wheels, you won't need to worry about Class D fires in your car, but Class A, B, and C fires can all occur.

Fire extinguishers come in all sizes, but in just one basic shape. Be sure to shop around.

You must be aware of the type of fire you are fighting. The wrong kind of extinguishing agent can actually *spread* a fire. For instance, using a water extinguisher on a gas or oil blaze would be extremely dangerous.

The most common types of extinguisher you'll find for sale will be good on more than one class of fire. Some will have the B-C designation, and some will be A-B-C models. The B-C types will be sodium bicarbonate, potassium bicarbonate or potassium chloride. The A-B-C ones will be ammonium phosphate, or Halon 1211.

There's a nifty advantage to the A-B-C models – if you're not sure whether electrical wiring is involved, you're covered.

If you have some extra bucks to spend on a fire extinguisher you may want to look into a different fire-fighting agent known as Halon 1211. Halon 1211 is a methane-family gas that leaves no residue after use. (The other types, except for carbon dioxide, will.) Halon 1211 has become popular for use in places where lack of residue is important, such as computer rooms. But at about $30 it's still rather expensive for the average person.

Okay, now it's helpful hints time. When you go into a store looking for a fire extinguisher you will notice a letter-and-number designation on the container. It will say something like 5-A:10-B:C.

What this means is that the extinguisher can be used by the average person to cover five square feet of a Class A fire, 10 square feet

continued

If there's a fire in your engine compartment, it's a bad idea to open the hood until you have a fire extinguisher in hand, or something else to combat the flames . . .

of a Class B fire, and can also be used on a Class C. Class C fires are not given square footage ratings since these are Class A or B fires which also involve electrical equipment.

Make sure whatever extinguisher you buy is listed by either the Underwriter's Laboratories (UL), or the Factory Mutual Engineering Corporation (FM).

Now what about the size and type to buy? Well, that'll depend on your personal vehicle. The Fire Equipment Manufacturers Association (FEMA) recommends you have something of at least the 2¾ to 5 pound capacity in your auto. But we don't want to discourage you from buying a larger model. Also, FEMA says the A-B-C multi-purpose dry chemical cylinders are best for car use. These are reasonable in price – they'll run between eight and 20 dollars.

Another thing: Don't go in for the small aerosol containers or squeeze bottles. These contain too little agent to help in most instances, and they require you to get too close to the flames.

. . . and after you've opened it, slamming it closed again won't do a whole lot of good.

Providing a Home: After you've got the extinguisher, where do you keep it? It is best to have it close to you, so it can be grabbed quickly when you need it. The best place for it is in the passenger compartment of the car. That way it's there with you so you can use it on your smoking engine, or spray it where you dropped your cigarette and caught the seat on fire.

Most of the extinguishers come with a mounting bracket, which you can use to mount it under the dash on the passenger side of the front seat. It will be immediately available there, and not in the way.

Sometime you may have to use the thing – not a pleasant thought, but the chance of using it is the reason for having it. Extinguishers are very simple to operate and they have instructions for use on the container itself. You should read these now and familiarize yourself with them, if you want to be effective in fighting a fire in your car. You won't have time to read the label when your hood is turning into a potato chip.

In line with this, you should also know the capabilities of the particular extinguisher you own. Like, will it spray for five seconds, 20 or 30? And, of course, what kind of fires is it effective against?

Care and Feeding: You'll need to maintain the fire extinguisher if you want it to function when you need it, the same as you need to maintain the car itself. Fortunately, maintenance on one of these things is easy and not time-consuming. There will probably be instructions on maintenance with the extinguisher itself, but here are a few items to watch for.

Most fire extinguishers have a pressure gauge to insure their effectiveness. Make sure it reads "fully charged," but not overcharged. If the charge is either high or low, have it serviced. Also, there is a weight designated on the instructions label for the extinguisher. Weigh it at least every six months; if it's below the desired weight, have it recharged.

Other things to check: the nozzle opening should be clear, not clogged with some foreign object. Also: There will be a ring pull-pin, like that on a hand grenade, through the handle to prevent accidental discharge. The pin is held in place by a wire. Check this wire seal to make sure it has not been tampered with.

Now about recharging the extinguishers. The cylinders are plainly labeled either rechargeable or non-rechargeable on the container.

The non-rechargeable kind must be disposed of

after use. But with proper care, this kind will last about six years, if not used.

The rechargeable kind, which is only a little more expensive by the way, will last almost indefinitely. It should be serviced and recharged every six years, even if it appears okay and the pressure indicates it is ready to go.

Take the extinguisher to a company that services them, for recharging and testing. There are listings for these companies under "fire extinguishers" in your yellow pages.

Another thing: after you have used the extinguisher, even if it is only partially emptied, have it recharged immediately. Even partial use could deplete the pressure and leave you with zilch when you most need the thing.

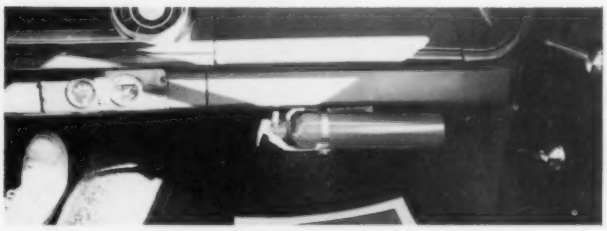
If you dispose of an extinguisher for any reason, DO NOT incinerate it. The thing could explode and injure you.

Now you're a little better prepared to go out and get a fire extinguisher. Be sure to shop around and compare prices. There are good buys to be found if you do.

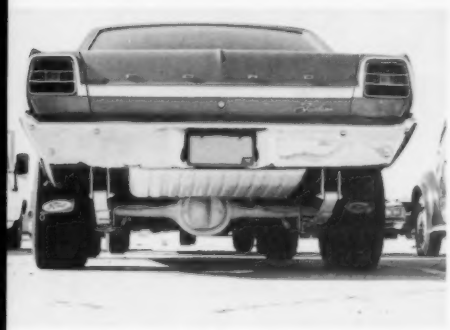
Make the small investment in a fire extinguisher, on the chance that it may save your larger investment in your car.

The extinguisher's pressure gauge will tell you when it's ready to use. It must read in the safe range, neither too low or too high. Otherwise, have it serviced.

Make sure the wire on the ring pull pin is intact. This insures the unit has not been tampered with, and is ready to go.

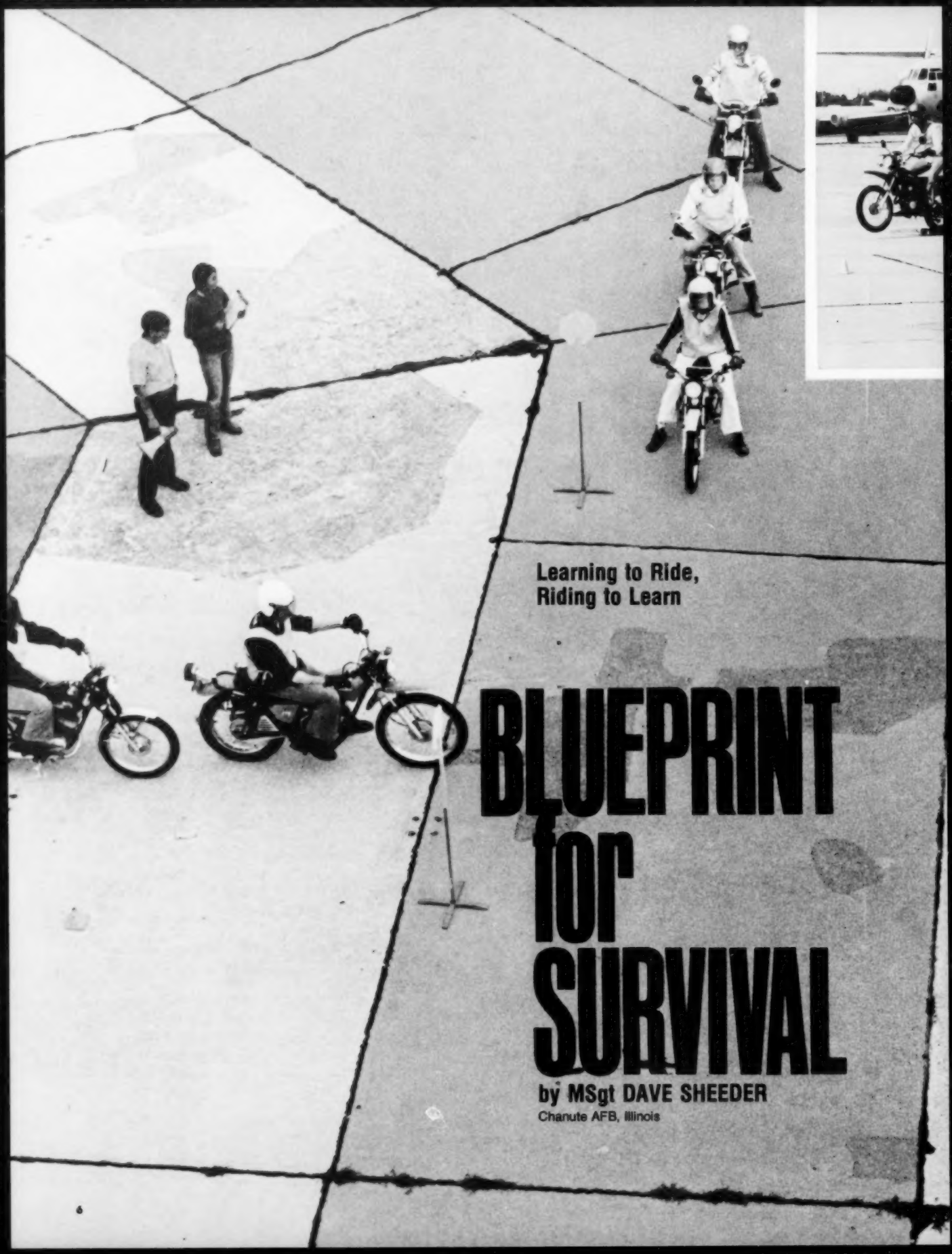


Attached by the mounting bracket to the underside of the dash, your fire extinguisher would be handy, and it wouldn't be in the way of your passengers.



Jacked-up rear ends may make the car look faster, but they also increase the risk of fire if the exposed gas tank is damaged after an accident.

(right)
A car fire can happen anywhere, and if you're prepared, like this guy, you avoid junking a burned-out shell.



Learning to Ride,
Riding to Learn

BLUEPRINT for SURVIVAL

by MSgt DAVE SHEEDER
Chanute AFB, Illinois

With aircraft used for various Chanute technical training courses as a backdrop, students put their cycles through their paces under the watchful eye of Staff Sergeant Stephen Perry (right).

Amplified by a bullhorn, Jan Randazzo's voice rang out loud and clear across the concrete slab flightline.

"Gentlemen, start your engines!"

What looked and sounded like the beginning of a motocross was actually part of a specially-designed school that opened at Chanute AFB this year.

Through the combined efforts of the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), University of Illinois (UI) and the Chanute Air Force Base safety office, people here now have the opportunity to learn how to ride motorcycles properly and safely.

Sponsored by the university and federally funded through IDOT, the program offers 22 hours of free instruction to military members, Department of Defense civilian employees and dependents at Chanute.

But the UI isn't the only university involved in the program. The IDOT is contracting with six other universities throughout Illinois to offer the Motorcycle Rider Course to residents 16 years of age and older. Like the program at Chanute, there is no charge for the instruction; however, in some cases a token registration fee is required.

"The Illinois Department of Transportation is involved with motorcycle safety training because of the rapid increase in the number of motorcycle riders, registrations, accidents and fatalities," explained Charles D. Jones, an IDOT public information officer.

He noted that since the Illinois Supreme Court ruled the mandatory helmet law unconstitutional in 1969, safety people felt that an alternative was needed to reduce motorcycle-related injuries and fatalities . . . by helping cyclists develop basic riding skills before venturing onto Illinois roadways.

The heady popularity of motorcycling, and the sobering side effects of increased motorcycle-related accidents in Illinois, are a reflection of what's happening nation-wide. There are about 15 million motorcycle riders in the United States—and the number is increasing each year.

National statistics also show that the increase in the number of riders

continued

continued

has been accompanied by an increase in the number of accidents. One study says that 25 percent of all motorcycle accidents involve riders with less than six months' experience and 60 percent involve riders with less than one year's experience – regardless of their age.

Because of these distrubing accident statistics and the importance of learning to ride a motorcycle safely, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation developed a curriculum package for safe motorcycle operation. The foundation is a national, private, nonprofit organization whose goal is the reduction of motorcycle accidents and injuries. It is funded solely by five leading motorcycle manufacturers: Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Harley-Davidson.

The first course, the Beginning Rider Course, was released in 1973 and was used in school, community and military motorcycle education programs throughout the United States. (DRIVER gave it high praise at the time.)

Today's Motorcycle Rider Course is the culmination of years of research by educators and experienced motorcyclists. It is structured to meet the motorcycle curriculum specifications developed by the National Public Service Research Institute under a contract for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation.

"It's an excellent course," said SSgt Stephen Perry, of the Chanute ground safety office, who volunteered to be an instructor for the 10-day on-base course. "Through classroom instruction and on-bike training, novice riders learn skills they need to handle a cycle in traffic and to respect motorcycles – which helps build confidence and safer cycling."

Beginners aren't the only ones who benefit from the instruction. Even Perry, who has 13 years' motorcycle riding experience, has learned a trick or two. He and the other instructors of the course are graduates of the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's instructor training course.

"I believe that cyclists can never learn too much about how to handle their bikes correctly and safely – from pre-start checks to avoiding a crash," he said. "Unfortunately, I learned my first lesson about motorcycles the hard way."

As a teenager growing up in Portland, Mich., Perry saved his pennies and bought a used 250cc cycle.

"I had little respect for that machine," he reminisced. "I was young and foolish, and thought I knew it all. I was riding the way I wanted to, not the right way – and it caught up to me.

"I'd had lots of spills, but nothing serious until I tried to jump a dirt mound. The bike went out from under me and I landed on my head. Because of peer pressure, I wasn't wearing a helmet. I was lucky . . . I could have been killed."

A friend of his father wasn't that lucky. Perry said his father was involved in a motorcycle accident when he was 23 years old and a member of a Chicago motorcycle gang.

"Dad was operating the bike and his buddy was on behind him," the sergeant explained. "Neither was wearing a helmet. His buddy was killed in the crash; Dad was seriously injured and wasn't expected to live, but he did and promised to devote the rest of his life to God. He became a minister."

Perry noted that if his father and he had attended a motorcycle rider course like the one offered cyclists at Chanute, those accidents may not have happened.

One of the course graduates here, Marrilyn Hamparian, enrolled in the course because her daughter had purchased a motorcycle and "I was very apprehensive about it," she admitted.

"But I decided to join rather than fight it. Because of our daughter's age, our approval wasn't necessary (dependents less than 18 years old must have written parental permission). I would recommend the class to anyone who rides the highways on any form of vehicle.

"Even if a graduate never rides or buys a cycle, it gives a person insight into the problems on our streets and highways, which could result in automobile drivers helping lower the accident rate involving cycles.

"Our class was unanimous in its opinion that the course was an important part of our base safety training."

The intensive course begins with the basics. The first eight to 10 hours of classroom instruction include a 72-page illustrated textbook; four sound-color instructional films showing pre-street and on-street riding; and three sound-color film strips identifying motorcycle parts, controls and maintenance techniques.

Outside, students learn how to mount and dismount cycles lent by local motorcycle shops – so if they don't own a motorcycle they can still learn to ride. They also learn how to start and stop, operate controls and walk the bike. Later, they learn the hard stuff: controlling rear wheel skids, quick stops, stopping on a curb and carrying passengers.

Also, they are taught how to lean and weave through a series of circles

continued

Jan Randazzo uses a bullhorn so that her instructions can be heard above the roar of motorcycle engines.

Staff Sergeant Stephen Perry, of the Chanute ground safety office, talks about the Motorcycle Rider Course with (from left) Debi Gilliland, course coordinator, and Jan Randazzo and Michael Hoadley, course instructors from the University of Illinois.

(below)
Course instructor Jan Randazzo (left) and Debi Gilliland, course coordinator, use pylons to set up the on-bike portion of the course on Chanute's flightline.

A student rides his bike over a plank to learn the right way—the safe way—to handle obstacles.

Michael Hoadley measures the course distance while Jan Randazzo and Debi Gilliland position pylons, used to teach riders the skills they need to handle their motorcycles safely—from pre-start checks to avoiding a crash.

Photos by SSgt BOBBY CUYLER

continued

and figure eights, how to ride over obstacles, and evasive maneuvers such as quick lane changes.

"Throughout the course, mini-skill tests are given to keep cyclists on their toes," said Jan Randazzo, a University of Illinois student and the other instructor for the Motorcycle Rider Course conducted at Chanute.

"After students complete 11 hours of course work, a written 'knowledge' test is administered, and a final motorcycle operator's test is given on the last day of class."

Knowing that safe-riding practices are a reflection of how well a rider learns to operate a cycle, Senior Airman Fred Micklos listens carefully to instructions.

After the final test, cyclists may remain at the flightline and take the Illinois motorcycle license test if they wish. Students who successfully complete the tests are given a certificate, which is good at some insurance companies for a 10 percent discount on motorcycle insurance.

"The course includes everything a cyclist needs to get started on the right foot – or wheel, if you will," Randazzo continued. "All equipment, including cycles, helmets, gloves and textbooks, is provided. We ask that students wear heavy clothing and boots. Protective equipment and clothing help to decrease the extent of injury if a motorcyclist is involved in an accident.

"We point out that a rider should never wear such things as short-sleeve shirts with no jacket, shorts or cut-offs, and positively no tennis shoes, sandals or loafers."

The instructors also stress that four-wheeled vehicles are the biggest threat to motorcycle operators – bar none! But they are quick to add that a lot of responsibility for safety still rests with the cyclist.

Perry said that four-wheeled vehicle operators can help reduce the number of car-bike accidents by keeping a few rules-of-the-road in mind:

- The motorcyclist has the same right-of-way privileges as other motorists and is entitled to the same courtesy on the roadway.
- If a motorist is following a motorcycle, allow plenty of distance when approaching a railroad track. If the crossing is rough or the tracks cross the road at an angle, the rider will have to slow down to maneuver.
- Certain types of bridge surfaces are dangerous for cycles. The rider can't tell what he is going to do until he gets there. Give the cyclist plenty of room and be prepared to stop quickly.
- Motorcycle riders are entitled to use the full width of the traffic lane, the same as a car. Do not try to stop next to a cyclist in the same lane – either change lanes or stay behind. When passing, motorists should change lanes and pass the cycle as if it were another car.

Some of the highway dangers of which cyclists should be aware are cars pulling out of side roads into a bike rider's lane of traffic; pedestrians walking into the lane of traffic, causing a bike rider to swerve into oncoming traffic; and what Perry calls "sucker action."

"I've given it that name because a bike rider seems to be fooled or suckered into believing that a vehicle is going to do one thing, when it in fact does just the opposite," the sergeant explained.

"For example, you're riding a bike in the left lane of a four-lane divided highway and a truck in front of you suddenly moves to the right. Thinking that the driver is going to make a right turn or change lanes, you start to overtake the truck. Then, quicker than you can wink an eye, the truck driver turns

continued

Airman First Class Eugene Thomas (right) gets a few pointers from Staff Sergeant Stephen Perry on how to synchronize use of the hand clutch with the gear shift lever.

Chanute's flightline provides a safe and roomy area for motorcycle course participants.

Staff Sergeant Stephen Perry shows a student how to adjust a motorcycle chain.

Students listen as a course instructor tells them that the key to a safe traffic mix between automobile drivers and motorcycle riders is understanding and learning to share the roadway.

continued

left and cuts across your lane of traffic, right in front of you.

"Depending upon how fast you're going, you may not be able to stop in time. If not, the result is collision – 'sucker action'."

To prevent this type of situation, the sergeant suggests that cyclists drop back or reduce their speed when first they notice a vehicle in front of them moving to one side of the road or the other.

"Keep an eye on the front wheels of that vehicle," Perry continued. "If they turn, and if you're back behind the vehicle far enough, you should have time to react and avoid an accident.

"In general, treat everyone driving a four-wheeled vehicle as if they are deaf and blind. In other words, to them a cyclist is invisible – they can't see him, sense him or hear him. If cyclists believe that, they'll make out much better on the highways."

He added that driving too fast for conditions gets a lot of bike riders into trouble: "Many accidents could have been avoided if cyclists had been driving according to road conditions – whether they be wet, icy, or crowded with traffic."

Overconfidence, too, leads to trouble.

"The day a cycle rider thinks he's got motorcycle riding whipped is the day he'd better park his bike," Perry said.

Defensive riding also got the instructors' vote as a way to avoid an accident. Such things as using the cycle's horn to let motorists know that a rider is approaching, using directional signals when turning, and passing one vehicle at a time at a slow speed when traffic is lined up and stopped are defensive measures that safety-conscious bike riders swear by.

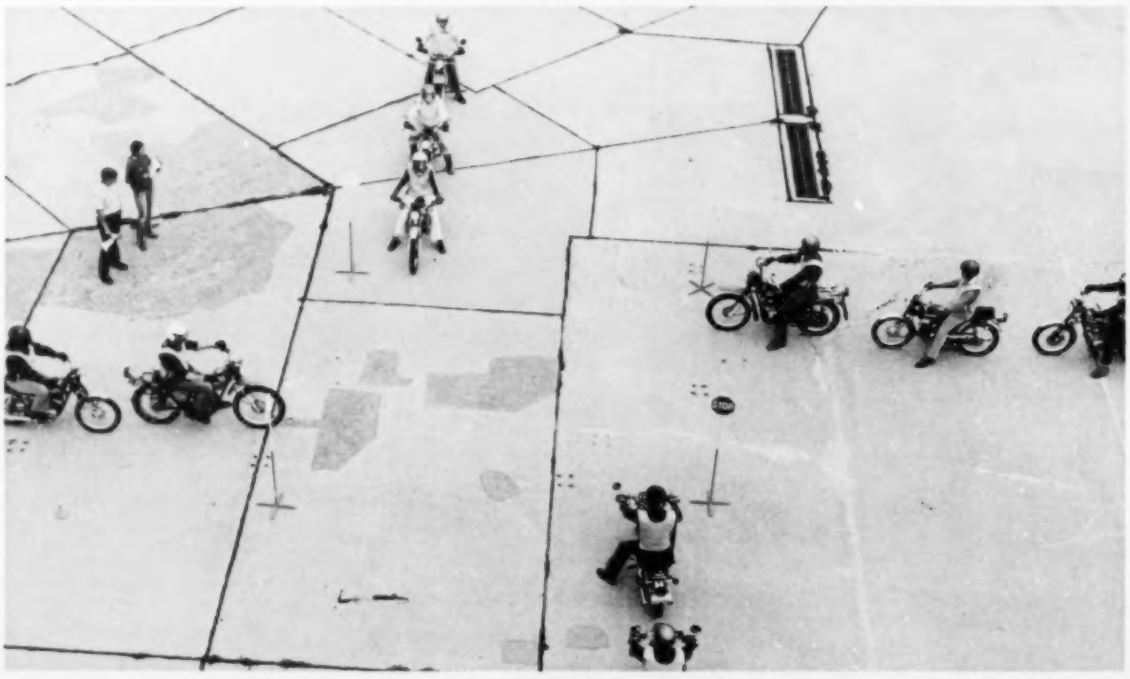
"And watch for motorists who believe that they've just got to be first," Perry warned. "They'll pull right out in front of a bike rider from a side street instead of waiting until the cyclist passes the intersection, even if there's no traffic behind the rider. The driver of the car could wait until the rider passes and the way is clear, but nine times out of 10 he won't."

These and other points about how to handle a motorcycle safely in traffic are keynoted throughout the rider course – a must for the beginner and a blueprint for survival for every cyclist.

(NOTE: Air Force safety office people who would like more information about the Motorcycle Rider Course may write to: Motorcycle Safety Foundation, 6755 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum, Maryland 21090, Attn: Dr. Allen Robinson)

Examiner Tom Marshky, from the Illinois Secretary of State's office, assists Airman Jo Blackwood fill in the paperwork to obtain her motorcycle operator's license after completing the training course at Chanute.

(below)
Students practice stopping and starting at intersections.



ROTATE YOUR TIRES

To get the longest and safest service from your tires, rotate them in accordance with the recommendations in your owner's manual. The Tire Industry Safety Council says every 6,000 to 8,000 miles gets you the best tread wear.

The first rotation is the most important because it helps "set" wear patterns. If irregular wear occurs, rotation should probably be done sooner. Check air pressure after rotating.

Bias and belted bias tires should be rotated in this manner: The left rear tire is moved to the left front; the left front tire is moved diagonally to the right rear; the right rear moves to the right front, and the right front moves diagonally to the left rear.

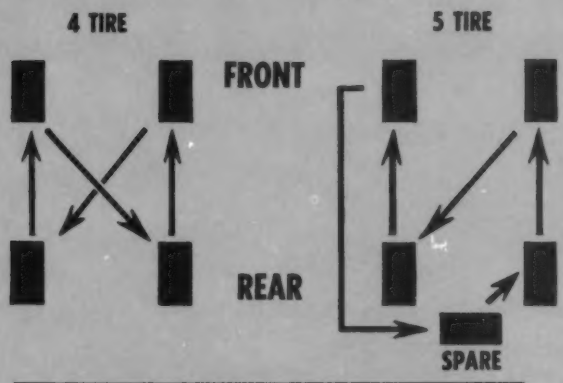
There is a slightly different pattern if you want to include the spare tire: The spare should be put on the right rear; the right rear tire should be moved to the right front; the right front tire should be moved to the left rear; the left rear tire should be moved to the left front, and the left front tire becomes the spare.

For radials, correct rotation involves only switching front and rear on each side – not moving any tire diagonally. Substitute the spare for the radial tire with the most wear.

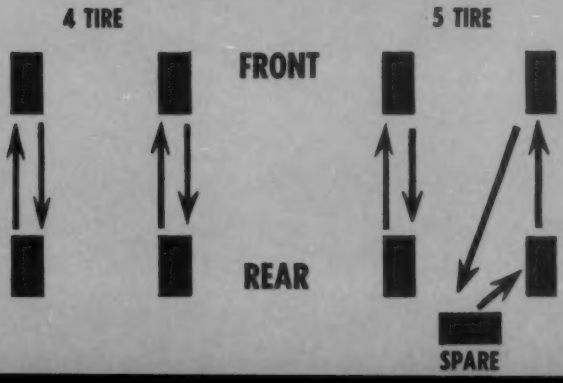
When snow tires are installed, the regular tread tires on the rear should be moved to the front and the front tires stored. When snow tires are removed, install the stored tires on the rear. Don't rotate studded tires. Always remount them in the original positions.

The Tire Industry Safety Council will supply a copy of its consumer tire guide, a pressure gauge, tread depth gauge, and set of four spare valve caps in a "Tire Safety Kit" for $2.25. Write the council at P.O. Box 1801, Washington, D.C. 20013.

BIAS AND BELTED BIAS TIRES



RADIAL TIRES



DEAR DRIVER

by Capt CHARLES H. VAUGHN
180th Tactical Fighter Group
Ohio ANG

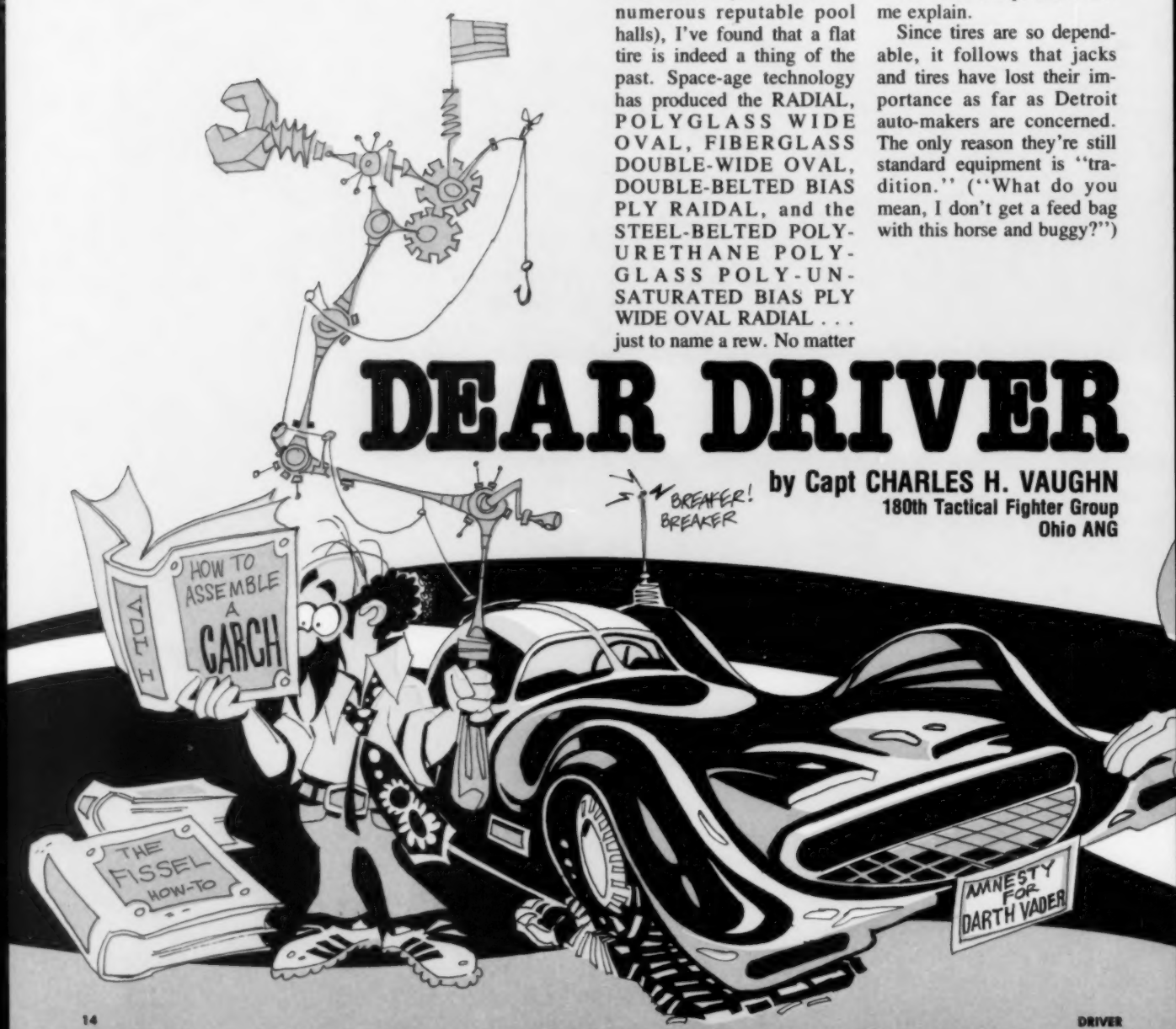
A couple of weeks ago my ego was shattered. I was driving along a superhighway in my late model car and experienced a flat tire. Now I'm not so sensitive that a flat tire would upset me; however, the fact that changing that tire took an hour and a half completely destroyed me. I could understand my old friend Willard "thumbs" Pittman having trouble – but me? I'm mechanically inclined you see. I've passed every manual dexterity test I've ever taken with flying colors! (Round peg in round hole . . . square peg in square hole, etc.) I even taught high school-level industrial arts for a time. (Round kid in square desk, etc.). I know the difference between a left- and right-handed monkey wrench!

When I was a teenager, I could change a tire in the dark and be back in the car "SPARKIN" in 10 minutes flat. Old age you say??? Nay – 'tis PROGRESS.

After a thorough and time-consuming investigation into this matter (conducted in numerous reputable pool halls), I've found that a flat tire is indeed a thing of the past. Space-age technology has produced the RADIAL, POLYGLASS WIDE OVAL, FIBERGLASS DOUBLE-WIDE OVAL, DOUBLE-BELTED BIAS PLY RAIDAL, and the STEEL-BELTED POLY-URETHANE POLY-GLASS POLY-UN-SATURATED BIAS PLY WIDE OVAL RADIAL . . . just to name a rew. No matter what their name, with or without blimps, the tire manufacturers have achieved near perfection. The odds of the average motorist experiencing a flat tire in this day and age are about the same as winning the grand prize in the Irish Sweepstakes.

You will now naturally deduce that since tire failures are so rare, my one-and-one-half-hour fiasco was caused by an obvious lack of practice . . . Right? Wrong again, Clyde! The real reason is that changing a tire today is too darn complicated. Let me explain.

Since tires are so dependable, it follows that jacks and tires have lost their importance as far as Detroit auto-makers are concerned. The only reason they're still standard equipment is "tradition." ("What do you mean, I don't get a feed bag with this horse and buggy?")



Detroit assigns their senior engineers important tasks like hood, fender and gas-cap design while the kid with the long hair who's fresh out of college takes his sticky slide-rule to the back storage closet for spare tire and bumper-jack development. In an effort to impress his superiors, the young engineer uses his thorough education to design a 32-piece jack which, when disassembled, fits rather snugly under the knocked-down-space-saver spare tire or the underside of the driver's seat or the inside of the right front fender, etc. His design necessitates having to place a rather large decal on the inside of the trunk lid, listing 57 easy steps, complete with illustrations, on the simple art of changing a tire.

My case in point: STEP1 – Remove wingnut "A" from Narcel "B" exposing buttplate "C" . . . (15 minutes later) STEP 12 – attach Ratchet "Q" to Fissel "R" using care not to damage the Carch as this will be used later . . . (17 minutes more) STEP 30 – Now insert assembled jack handle "Z" into receptacle provided on jack stand "KK" . . . (19 minutes later, including minor profanities) STEP 41 – Insert Carch into the tire wrench "M" and loosen octagonal wheel nuts (Where the *¢%¢%#$# did I put that Carch?) Between step 44 and 45, a patrolman stopped to help. After a short time, he scratched his head and left, mumbling that he had to answer a three-eleven or something. (Funny . . . I never heard the radio call.) On Step 47 the car fell off the jack and I had to repeat all the steps starting from #34. The tire was finally changed and I was on my way . . . after stopping to pick up the crushed hubcap "T" which I had run over in my haste to depart. Total time elapsed – one hour and 30 minutes!

So fellow motorists, there you have it – the Real Story. My ego's been restored, the crushed hubcap has added character to my auto, and through diligence, perseverance and hard work, I've exposed a new menace to the motoring public. Who knows – if we complain loud enough to the right people, maybe Detroit will have the biggest automotive call-back in history. To Ralph Nadar – Eat your heart out, Baby.

More surprises are in store for you, Charles. Science has now come up with the elliptic tire, promising 10% improvement in gas mileage and much improved handling. Problem is, the elliptic requires a special wheel, a wheel on which no other tire of current design can be mounted.

On the other hand, spare tires and jacks may disappear entirely because of the "run flat" feature lately introduced. It lets you go about 50 miles on the flat–far enough to reach a station. Interested?

OH, FUDGE! Just as I'm about to aid you, sir, duty calls on the 2-way raddio, and I must away and answer a THREE-ELEBEN !
Even though da tire is flat only on da bottom, da foist thing yez must do is getting da BS degree in Engineering, right?
HOKAY! den to an foist-class graduate school for da Masters und Ph.D. degrees, right?
HOKAY! und den. . . .
POLICE

MOTO CROSS SAFETY GEAR

It has been said "the heart of a true Navy man belongs to the sea" and "if the Navy wanted you to have a wife, she would have issued you one."

Well, I can deal with those old sayings and cope with life in the military. I am Air Force and my husband, Ron, is Navy. I can understand his allegiance to the fleet and his obligation to duty.

What I can't understand is his sometimes almost fervent love for motocross racing. Whatever part of his heart isn't filled with love for the Navy is filled with his passion for dirt biking!

Now, I admit that once a person is set on doing some-

(left, above)
Ron feels out the track before race time.

Make sure those "leathers" have knee and shin guards, thus saving you from crushed knee caps.

Boots are a must and save many a broken bone.

thing, there is no way or no one that can persuade him out of it – I learned that right away. But one thing you should know about me: I am, in the true sense of the word, a chicken. So with that in mind, plus the fact that I wasn't about to change Ron and stop his racing, you can understand that I put my foot down and made some strict rules.

One of them was that he was not to ride any track that did not have an emergency medical care unit and ambulance. (Whenever there is an accident or injury on the track the race is stopped and doesn't begin again until medical care is given or the ambulance returns from a hospital run.) Most tracks in Southern California do take such precautions, so that rule wasn't a real threat to Ron's racing.

My most important ground rule was that if he was going out there to be "killed," at least he was going to be more than adequately equipped with safety gear. Now that isn't easy, considering my husband is 6 foot 5 and proportionately built. Sure it costs money, but the expense is worth it to me and I'm sure the Navy likes the fact that he will report to work each Monday all in one piece.

Most of Ron's equipment was special ordered from

continued

by
Sgt JEANNE A. ROGERS, USAF
Air Force Aerospace Audiovisual Service

continued

Wearing two pairs of long athletic socks helps cushion those slides around corners.

Make sure shoulder pads fit comfortably and you have freedom of movement.

The belt helps spot your kidneys and eliminates extreme back pain.

Malcolm Smith's company, the reason being that it was the only manufacturer that could custom-make equipment for a guy Ron's size. There are many other companies which make the same excellent safety equipment. Here are some things I learned that may be helpful to you if you're getting into racing.

The first and most important equipment you should outfit yourself with when considering climbing on any bike is a helmet. For motocross a full-faced type with interchangeable tinted visors is highly recommended. If the helmet you choose is not a full-faced style, be sure to be equipped with goggles and a face mask. The goggles should also have interchangeable lenses so you can compensate for light conditions – sunny, overcast, or night racing.

Experienced riders can't overestimate how important it is to invest in a kidney belt. Without one, a racer will experience extreme back pain. It's not your back, it's your kidneys joggling around. Make sure the belt fits tight and gives firm support to the back.

Gloves are another piece of equipment a motocross racer should not go on the track without. Look for leather gloves that fit snugly and have padding on the knuckles. There also are styles which have padded palms, but this is really up to the rider's preference.

Boots are a must and save many an ankle and broken bones. When selecting boots, try them on with two pairs of thick, long athletic socks. Don't be satisfied with anything but a proper fit. Boots should have firm ankle support, padded shin and ankle guards, and a smooth toe and sole. Most boots today come with an elastic band top which keeps mud and water out, but if you don't mind wet feet it is not necessary.

If you'd like to keep your skin, a long-sleeved shirt should be part of your attire. It should have elbow pads. You can cut costs down in the long run by getting one that doesn't tear easily, like a nylon vented jersey. A sweat shirt and nylon windbreaker work just as well.

Shoulder pads go under the shirt. Make sure the fit is comfortable and you have freedom of movement. Many pads have a chest protector attached. Make sure you get this type, because the chest protector helps eliminate broken ribs and collapsed lungs.

Pants of "leathers," like the long-sleeved shirt, help save skin. It really doesn't make any difference if pants are all leather or the newer leather and nylon combination. Many racers prefer the combination type because they are cooler and do not rip as easily. I prefer them because they are machine washable. Whatever pant you choose, look for hip and shin pads and knee cups. If you decide on the combination style, be sure they have a leather seat, front and inside knee patches. To save on repair and replacement cost, inquire about the manufacturer's warranty. Ron's have a lifetime repair and replacement guarantee.

Ron has had lots of bumps and bruises, and more times than not he's sore on Monday morning. But the Navy doesn't have to worry, he'll be there for duty.

Me? I continue to watch the clock around 3:00 on Sunday afternoons and worry whether he's still intact. So far, my worrying has been for nothing – Ron's either stopped to help a buddy or is picking up a trophy.

Make sure gloves have padded knuckles; padded palms are optional.

Goggles not only protect you from flying missiles, but also, with the interchangeable lenses, adjust your vision to light conditions.

All outfitted and ready to go, Ron starts his bike and . . .

vaa-a-rooms!

Timely Topics

Good Looking Mileage-Maker from AMC

American Motors' new Gremlin GT features front and rear fender flares, front air dam, blacked-out door and quarter-window frames and special striping treatment. Also included is four-speed transmission and rally instrument package with tachometer.

In the days to come, increasing gasoline costs will face off with a sporty image as a sales point. It looks like AMC has come up with a winner on both counts.

Grounded Drunks Appear to Learn

Drunk drivers who have had their licenses suspended later have a better driving record than those fined or jailed but allowed to keep their licenses.

That is the finding of a California Motor Vehicle Department's survey which also showed how well such once-suspended drivers did.

Those whose driving privilege was suspended and later reinstated have 40 percent fewer reckless driving convictions, fewer crashes, fewer injury crashes and fewer total countable traffic convictions.

Cars, Trucks to be Recalled

The Transportation Department has announced that about 22,000 Plymouth, Dodge and Chrysler 1978 model cars and about 24,000 Dodge 1977 and 1978 light trucks are being recalled to correct potential defects.

The Chrysler Corp. estimates that 2 per cent of the cars may have steering shafts containing a coupling pin which could fall out, resulting in a loss of steering capability.

Involved are Plymouth Volares and Furys; Dodge Aspens, Monacos, Chargers and Diplomats; and Chrysler Cordobas and LeBarons, with tilt steering columns, which were manufactured between mid-September through early October of 1977.

The light-truck recall involves club cab models manufactured between August 1976 and August 1977. Their fuel tubes running from the fuel tank to the fuel pump may have been improperly routed in such a way that they could be abraded by a part of the underbody. Abrasion of the tube may cause fuel leakage.

Seat Belts

The federal government has been peeking at us—in fact, they've been looking into our cars while we're on the street to see how many of us are wearing seat belts. NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) checked up on almost 85,000 of us in 16 major cities, and the results are disappointing. Only 18.5 per cent of the nation's drivers are using their belts.

More drivers of subcompact and compact cars use seat belts than drivers of intermediate and standard models. (That's good because they are the most vulnerable people on the road.)

Usage of belts in foreign cars was higher than in American autos. Drivers of Volvos recorded the highest use percentage, 44.6 per cent.

Out of every 100 women drivers, almost 21 use belts. Out of every 100 men drivers, only about 17 were strapped in.

More drivers in the western states use belts than in the eastern states.

More drivers use belts during the evening rush hour than during other daylight hours.

How about you? Do you make it a habit to fasten your seat belt every time?

Self-Starting Engines

The Air Force Inspection and Safety Center recently discovered that there is a possibility that late-model cars equipped with breakerless ignitions may "self start."

In one reported instance, a Ford pick-up truck equipped with the Dura-Spark 2 electronic ignition system self-started due to a residual electrical charge that was stored in the secondary ignition system.

According to Ford Motor Company service manuals, the Dura-Spark 2 amplifier module and coil are "on" when the ignition switch is "on." Because of this, the ignition system will generate a spark when the key is turned off or when the distributor cap is tapped or disturbed. If there is a cylinder in the firing position and any residual fuel/air mixture is present, the engine will function as designed.

For this reason, Ford says "the ignition switch should remain 'off' during any underhood operations unless the intent is to start the engine or perform a specific test which requires the ignition switch to be 'on.' "

If you must perform underhood maintenance where the ignition switch must be on, follow these steps:

1. Leave ignition switch in the "off" position.
2. Remove secondary high-tension lead from coil to distributor.
3. Apply handbrake and insure wheel chocks are in place.
4. Insure tools, hands, etc., are clear of belts, fans, etc., before turning ignition switch to "on."

Chrysler Recalls Cars

Chrysler Corp. has recalled 1.3 million cars in the largest recall campaign in the automaker's history. The engines in the recalled cars tend to stall, the company said.

Chrysler officials said they had received 27 reports of accidents, seven involving injuries, associated with the stalling problem.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said it had reports of as many as 52 accidents possibly linked to the stalling problem. The agency said it had received about 1,000 complaints from owners of the vehicles.

The recalled cars are 1975, 1976 and 1977 Dodge Darts and Aspens and Plymouth Valiants and Volares equipped with 225-cubic-inch, 6-cylinder or 318-cubic-inch, V-8 engines.

Chrysler said the stalling stems from two sources: the accelerator pump seal in the carburetor may become distorted by some unleaded gasolines, failing to respond when the accelerator pedal is pressed; and, in some 6-cylinder engines, the emission control exhaust recirculation valve, designed to open as the engine gets warm, may open too early when the engine is idling or the car moving slowly.

A spokesman said the company does not have the necessary parts to make all repairs now but when the needed parts are available it will notify owners.

The Chrysler's compact Plymouth Volare and Dodge Aspen models were recently recalled for problems that could cause the loss of braking power in the front wheels.

The Right Way to Check Gas Mileage

While listening to automobile advertisements on television or radio, everyone has heard those famous words, "Your actual mileage may vary," after a speaker has given elaborate EPA gasoline ratings on one of the latest models. Indeed, unless one drives with a tailwind non-stop at 40 mph on a level freeway, his mileage will vary —downward!

If these statements are true, why are so many consumers satisfied that they are getting good mileage on their vehicles? The answer: They are probably not getting as much as they think! Checking mileage is not as easy as most people assume it to be. The standard rule, "Fill it up, take the number of miles driven, and divide by the number of gallons used," is true, but it disregards two very important steps required for accuracy.

First, an owner should fill his own tank. Where there is full service, the attendant often stops the pump on a convenient dollar amount to avoid change. Because the car could have held more gasoline, the actual mileage is less than what a computation shows. Self-service can be the best service.

Second, since the tilt of the paved area around the gasoline pumps is designed for drainage, not for insuring that a gas tank can be filled, a car must be stopped at the same service station, in the same spot, and facing the same direction for consecutive fills. Unless the car leans downward from the pump, the tank is likely to trap a pocket of air that will not allow gas to enter, or it will overflow rather than fill.

A wrong angle can cause a pump to shut off by as much as *four gallons short* of having a full tank—in a *small car*. (What often happens to many drivers is that after a true fill, they get one of this type, and, because the tank is nowhere near being full, the miles per gallon compute as outstanding. They are greatly satisfied with the results and make no further checks.) Stopping at the same station and spot at that station, in the same direction, insures that the fill level will be identical with previous ones and permits greater accuracy in computations. Since the tilt angle varies among stations, accuracy cannot be expected for someone who changes (certainly not for the miles driven on one tankfull).

When it is not possible to follow these steps, as would be the circumstance on a long trip, the surest method is to keep a record of all the miles driven and gasoline used from several fill-ups. A computation based on many fills will be much more correct than results taken from a single one.

. . . TSgt James Severe Clark, USAF

after dark

When it comes to driving at night, people fall into two groups: Those who really like it and those who'd just as soon forget it. Trouble is, like it or not, we have to do it. Especially in the deep winter months when the daylight hours are so brief that we are using the headlights just driving to or from work.

People who enjoy driving after dark are usually those with excellent night vision. Not everybody sees with the same degree of perception and accuracy. At night our seeing ability naturally diminishes, and so does our ability to sort out different objects and judge distance. Depth perception simply isn't as good as it is in the daytime when sizes, shapes, colors, shadows and relationships to the general background aid us in judging distance.

The ability of our eyes to see, adjust and recover from such things as headlight glare is reduced as we get older. The driver of 30 requires more light to see the same thing at night that a 20-year-old can see, and by the time he's 50 he may need twice as much light. These changes in the eyes come about so gradually that we often aren't aware of them and fail to make allowances.

To some extent, nighttime seeing ability can be sharpened. Take two people 21 years old, each with 20/20 vision. They see equally well in good light. But there's more to it in the dark – like peripheral vision, dark adaptation ability, and glare resistance. One may dislike night driving and never suspect it's because he can't see well in reduced light. If you think this may apply to you,

The emergency triangle is the first clue to trouble ahead. It gives notice to slow down and prepare to stop. In front of us is an accident, a police car and other emergency vehicles, but we can't really make out the scene yet.

here are some things which might help you.

Peripheral Vision. The ability to see to the sides while aiming your eyes straight ahead is known as peripheral vision. While this vision sees nothing very clearly, it's tremendously important to the driver because it picks up lights, movement, and anything that's lighter or darker than the background. Some people lack good peripheral vision either because they never learned to use it or because of a physical defect. Eyeglass frames can also interfere.

Experiment with your own peripheral vision. If you find you're not noticing the lights of a cross-traffic car as soon as you should, train yourself to move your head and eyes continuously so that your good "center" vision isn't tunneled straight ahead.

This constant sweeping movement of the eyes can help you distinguish objects.

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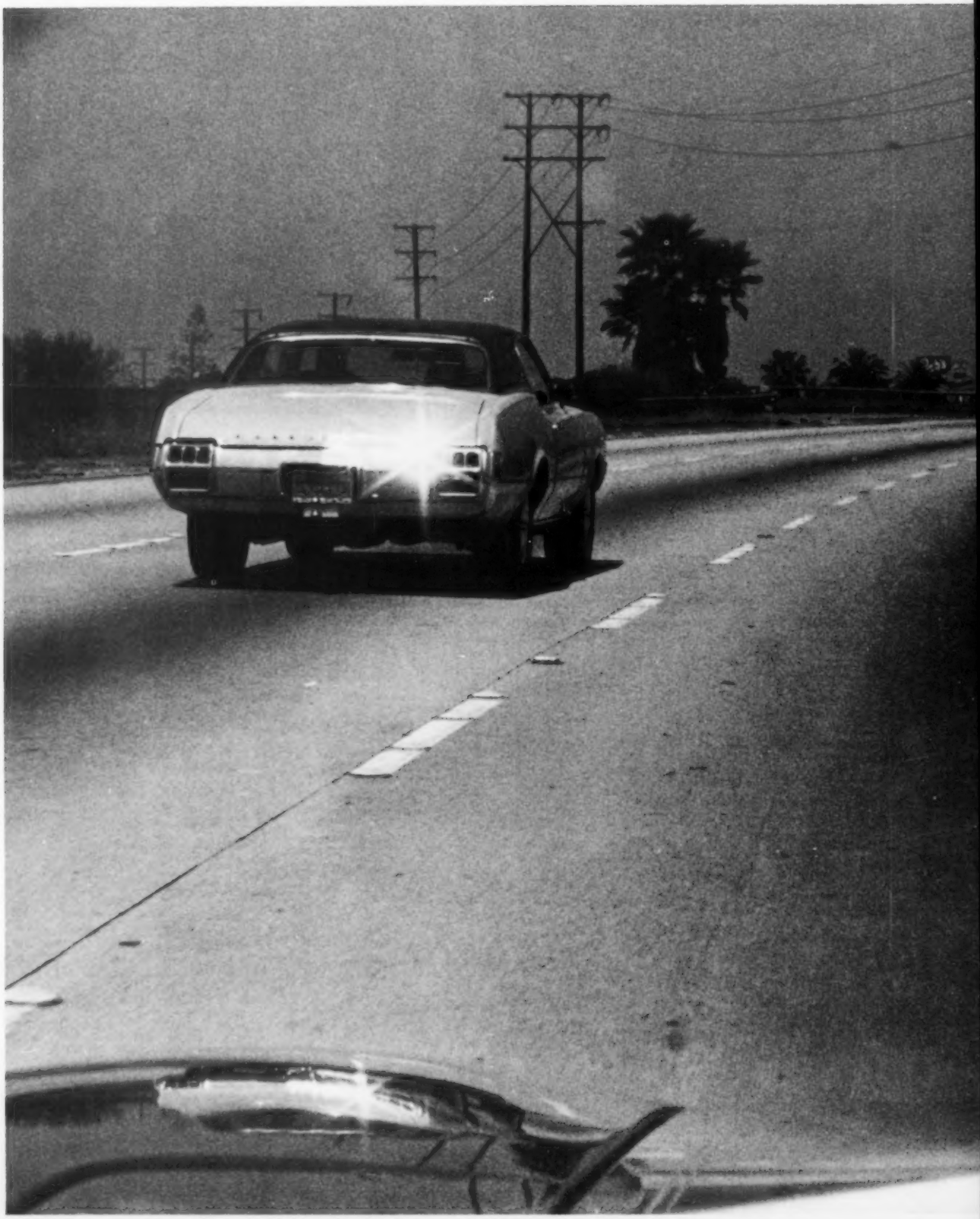
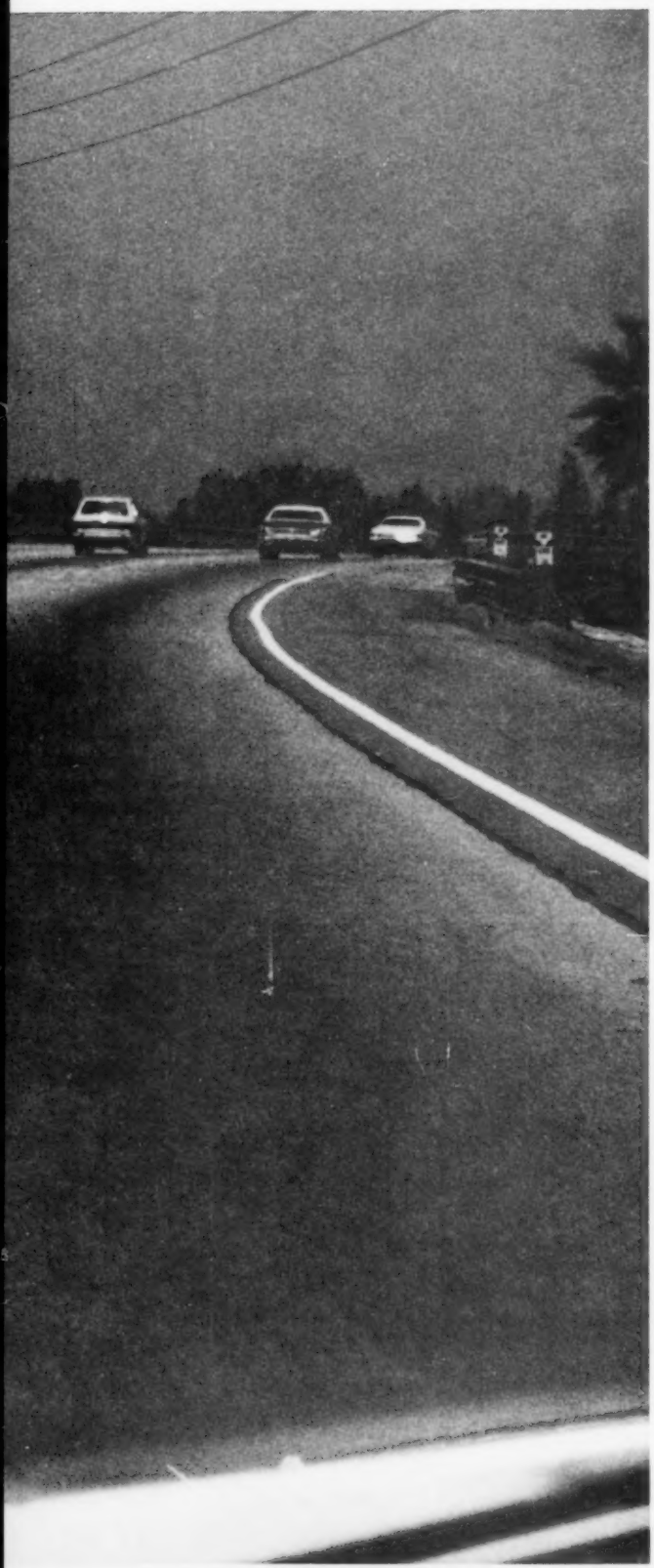
Sunrise and sunset hours can be difficult times to drive. Here the low sun is causing glare spots on our own vehicle and all those ahead of us.





By focusing a little to the side of an object rather than directly on it, you may be able to make it out. Your central vision is not as sensitive to very dimly lit shapes as your peripheral vision is.

Dark Adaptation. The ability of your eyes to adapt quickly to darkness or light also is important to nighttime driving. No matter how sharp your eyes are, it's going to take them a while to adjust to light-intensity change. You experience this every time you walk from bright sunlight into a darkened theater or restaurant.

The adjustment from dark to light is uncomfortable for a few seconds, but it is quick. The complete adjustment from light to darkness, however, may take as much as half an hour. True night vision adaptation does not occur while you are driving – dash lights and headlights are too bright. So basically, at night you are steering the vehicle by your ordinary day vision.

You can help yourself by wearing sunglasses. If you spend a day in bright sunshine – at the beach or in the snow – you are wise to wear sunglasses during the daylight hours. The glasses will help your eyes preserve their supply of "visual purple," a retinal chemical that helps them adapt to the dark. A day of exposure to much sun and glare without sunglasses can drastically cut ability to see at night.

Sunglasses should never be worn for night driving, although it can be helpful to put them on when you pull into a brightly lighted service station or refreshment area. When the eyes are shielded from the artificial glare, they seem to adjust more quickly to the darkness back on the road. Be sure to take them off before you start out again. You may find it helpful to dim your dash lights so that your eyes aren't constantly reacting to that light.

Glare Resistance. Hand in hand with dark adaptation is resistance to glare. This refers to how quickly you can see again after being exposed to the headlights of an oncoming car or the bright burst of light from a match or cigarette lighter. It's likely you'll be driving blind for 50 to 75 feet after the exposure, depending on your speed.

One out of seven people between 20 and 29 has below-average resistance to glare. They may be blind for several hundred feet after passing an oncoming car.

If you are particularly bothered by glare, there are things you can do to help yourself. Keep the inside of your windshield as clean as the outside. People sometimes forget how filmy the inside glass can become – especially if smokers use the car.

If you wear corrective lenses, keep them clean, too. And clean your headlights frequently. Headlights may seem bright when they're coming at you on the road, but try reading a newspaper by them sometime and see how weak they really are. Headlight dirt and misaim can reduce the distance a driver can detect objects at night by about 30 per cent. Incidentally, if your headlights don't seem quite right to you, perhaps they need aiming. If both low beam headlamps are misaimed by as little as eight-tenths of a degree, detection distance will be reduced by a third. And that's a lot.

When you are faced with a severe glare situation (a

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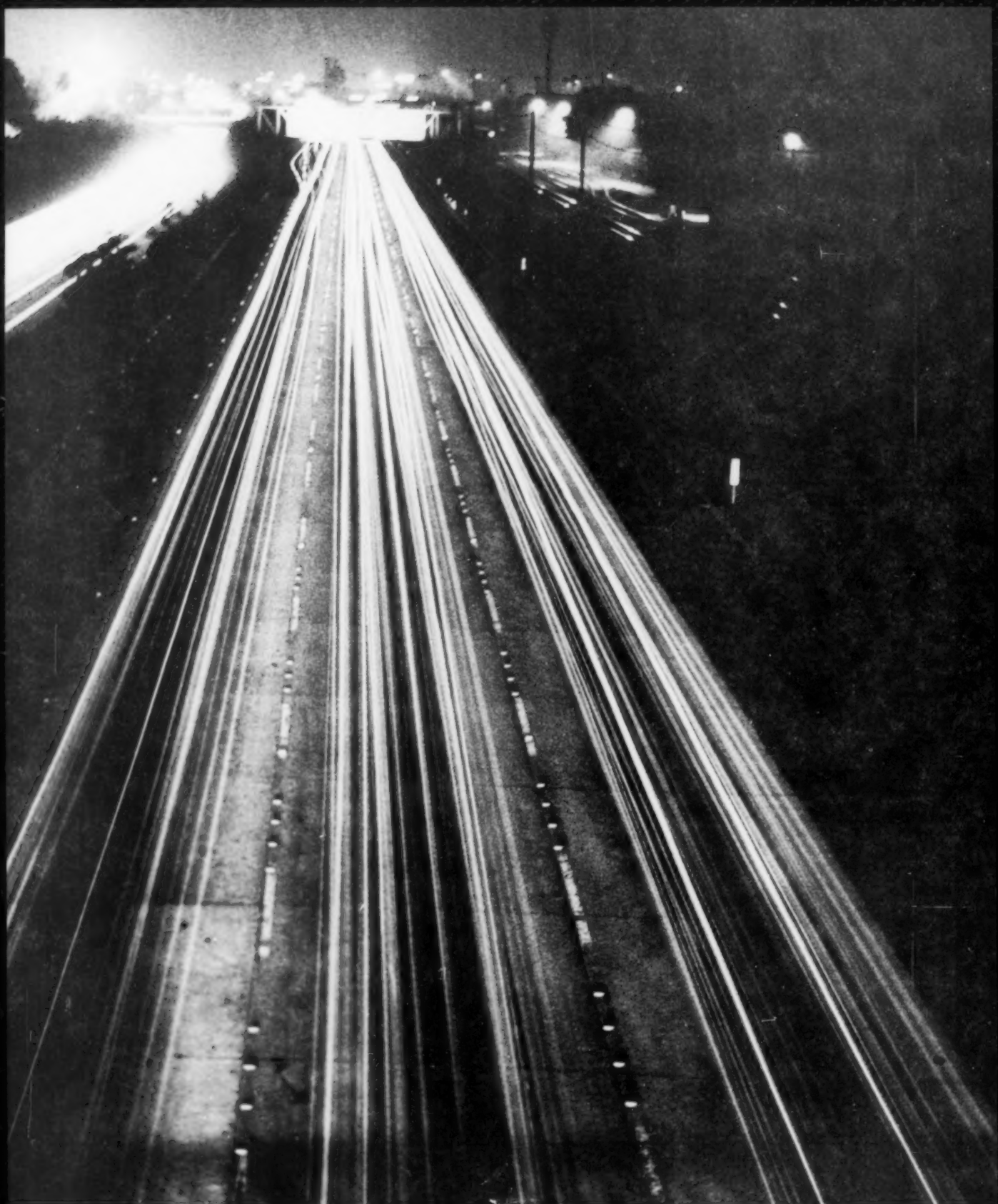

A divided freeway such as this is the safest place to drive at night. But even here the eyes must constantly adjust to varying amounts of outside light. Avoid the outer or shoulder lane at night—trouble is more likely to occur there.

driver who refuses to lower his high beams or a car with misaimed headlights), slow down and avoid staring directly at the approaching lights. Resist the temptation to get even by putting your high beams on. The usual advice is to guide yourself by keeping your eyes on the right edge of the road or on the oil-drip strip down the center of your lane. You may find it better to keep your eyes moving from the edge of the roadway back to the center of your lane, and then to a point somewhere in the oncoming car's lane. By doing this you may be able to drive a better course, see anything that might pop into your lane, and also spot potential hazards on his side of the street. Sharply-painted lane lines and center lines plus the reflective delineators used on most freeways are a real help to the night driver. Unfortunately, the painted lines wear away fast, while lines that should have been obliterated may remain slightly visible, and the motorist may suddenly have no idea where his lane really is.

Headlight adjustment is often ignored, but poorly aimed headlamps make it much harder for the driver to see pedestrians and other vehicles. Headlights don't give as much light as you may think, even when clean and well adjusted. Try reading a newspaper by their glow.

Driving Techniques. The two most important driving techniques affecting safety at night involve speed and following distance. Even with the finest vision in the world, you can't see beyond your headlights. If you drive so fast that you can't stop within the area they illuminate, you are moving toward a completely blind, no-stop crash zone. Don't over-drive your headlights. Some otherwise careful drivers don't reduce their speed at night when they are on familiar streets and roads around home. That's a trap you shouldn't fall into. Traffic is a changing scene. Nothing is exactly as you saw it earlier in the day, and you can't afford to assume that it is.

You should increase following distances at night because it is almost impossible to judge how fast the vehicle ahead is moving just by observing the taillights. It takes time and other clues to assure yourself of his speed.

Whenever possible, maintain an open space around you as far from other traffic as possible. You should do this in daytime too, but it's even more important at night because there are more drivers of questionable ability on the road. There are at least 8 million alcoholic drivers, another 17 million high-volume social drinkers, and nobody knows how many on other drugs. They're out there on the road with you at night far more than in the day. So are the drivers with night vision problems, tired drivers and drivers who refuse to make allowances and insist on driving at night the way they drive in the daylight.

If you have an emergency at night on the open highway, pull off the pavement as far as you can. Activate the four-way flashers. If you are well off the pavement it may be better to leave all your lights off rather than run the risk of someone "following your lights" right off the road and crashing into you.

If you don't have flashers and you're parked close to the road's edge, put the parking lights and interior lights on and, if you possibly can, get completely away from the car. If you have flares (and you should have at least two) or reflective triangles, set one up at the side of the road about 300 feet behind the car.

Put your night driving techniques into effect as soon as the sun goes down. Probably the most difficult time to drive is at twilight. Your eyes are struggling to adapt to the dimness, but your car's headlights aren't powerful enough to cast any useful light.

All the things we've been discussing are important in good weather. In bad weather they're even more so. Your night vision problems are compounded by rain. You not only have to strain to see through the darkness but you have to fight dazzling wet reflections of headlights, street lights and neon signs. It's good practice to wash the windshield before you start out on a rainy night. And give the wiper blades a quick going over with a paper towel. The rain really won't clean the windshield, and clean wiper blades will reduce the smearing of road film.

There's one final hazard of nighttime driving and that involves the mental state of the driver who's alone. There he is, snug in the comfortable cocoon of the car, the engine purring sweetly, the radio masking outside noise. The darkness hides the distractions of the daylight world. And first thing you know, he's off in a dream, eyes fixed straight ahead on the pavement at the end of the headlight beams, his mind completely heedless of all those hazards that are really out there in the dark.

Enjoy your nighttime driving. But not that much.

BACKFIRE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE OVERHEATED ENGINE

I am writing in reference to your article "The Overheated Engine (Jul '77) and Mr. N. M. Salsman's letter in "Backfire" (Sep '77).

Whenever I've experienced an overheated engine condition (Overheat Temp Light/Excessively High Temp on the temp gauge), my first course of action was to turn on the heater with a maximum airflow. If this didn't take care of the situation within several seconds, I turned off the air conditioner.

I've successfuly used this procedure three times while crossing the desert and once while making a long pull up a mountain in California and each time I managed to pass several vehicles that had previously been pulled off the road to cool down.

I would be greatly interested in the number of our readers who have used the heater to assist the radiator in heat dissipation *without* success . . .

A little something about motorcycles. Is it necessary for motorcycles to drive with their headlight on high beam during daylight hours? It is extremely aggravating to me, especially when they have been following me for several miles with this bright light reflecting in my rear view mirror.

Thoroughly enjoy DRIVER Magazine for the interesting, informative articles. Keep up the good work.

Lt Col Robert J. Schruefer
10525 108th Ave, S.W.
Tacoma, WA 98498

On many new motorcycles, the light comes on when the engine is started. That's good, because the cyclist needs all the visibility he can get. But the high beams should be used the same way the motorist uses his. The idea is to be visible, not blind other traffic.

MOTOCROSS CAT AND SALT PILLS

As a flight safety officer for over 5 years, I certainly appreciate DRIVER's approach to safety and enjoy the magazine.

The Sep '77 issue had a strip entitled MOTOCROSS CAT which implied that taking salt pills is a recommended procedure for avoiding sun stroke. As a flight safety officer, I invite the flight surgeon to address my aircrews on how to care for themselves during seasonal extremes of heat and cold. This summer he recommended an increase in salt intake with more salt on food versus taking salt pills. The reason for this recommendation was the possibility of the concentrated salt pill irritating the stomach lining. Another benefit is ease of increasing salt intake with food versus the hassle of acquiring salt pills.

Although this situation may not be extremely hazardous, it would be nice to destroy the myth that salt pills are needed and let people know that there is an easy way to help the body maintain the proper chemistry level during periods of exposure to heat.

Capt Charles R. Fortmeyer, USAF
26th Air Division/SEF
Luke AFB, AZ 85309

Just finished glancing through the September DRIVER and noticed the cartoon "Motocross Cat" on the back cover. A little bell rang in the back of the old brain when I came to "A hat, salt pills . . ."

I remember reading in a recent edition of either "Fathom" or "Lifeline" (both are Navy safety publications) an article about being careful using salt pills. I hope you will check it out, since indiscriminate use of salt is not such a good thing.

Mr. Michael Twiford, USN
A/SY/NSU Room 2534
Washington, DC 20520

You are both right. We should have added a line at the bottom of the cartoon which we borrowed from CYCLE NEWS.

RECALL PLAN FOR HAZARDOUS DRIVING

A few years ago I was fortunate to work for an excellent commander who had the insight and ability to use the recall plan to warn people of hazardous driving conditions. At the time I was stationed in Texas where periodically an ice storm would blow through. It was possibly even more dangerous in that area since most drivers there have very little experience driving in icy conditions and almost no automobiles are outfitted for such conditions.

The first incident that I remember was a particularly bad morning with freezing rain and light snow. About 30 minutes before I was to get ready for work, I received a phone call advising me of the road conditions and was told to standby at home until further notice.

The commander had kept abreast of the weather situation and road conditions throughout the early morning, and judging the situation to be dangerous to personnel, had utilized the squadron telephone alert recall plan to inform all personnel. By approximately 0930, the road conditions had improved considerably and the commander again used the recall plan to inform everyone and have them report for duty.

As it turned out, there were numerous traffic accidents throughout the town that morning and long lines at the main gate with several incidents of cars losing traction and not being able to get moving again. Some had actually slid off the pavement onto the edge of the road. A friend of mine later told me that he spent slightly over an hour just getting on base and to his office. Yet, our squadron personnel did not experience any difficulty at all that day.

During my two-year tour at Webb AFB, there were only two more similar incidents where the commander repeated this action. The possible accidents and/or injuries avoided more than compensated for the relatively few working hours lost.

Capt Ronald W. Wilkes, USAF
301 ARW/DOKM
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Although we received this letter some time ago, and perhaps Ronald is now

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a major stationed elsewhere, we certainly agree this is an excellent method of preventing possible accidents and worth the number of man-hours lost when conditions warrant postponing reporting times. We wanted to share it with you now, when bad driving conditions are in the offing.

DRIVING IN SAN FRANCISCO

Another super job by DRIVER Magazine! Your article "Driving the Streets of San Francisco" (Sep '77) was right on target for us folks stationed in the San Francisco Bay Area. Just as in Boston or New York City, there are unique challenges in driving, parking, and in getting into and out of San Francisco. After each issue of DRIVER Magazine has circulated through the office, it is "required reading" for my two teen-age sons. Keep those topical articles coming!

Lt Col Jack Howay, USAF
Satellite Test Center
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

Thanks for the kudos, Colonel.

CB RADIOS IN MEXICO

This is in reference to your article, "Mexico OKs CB Radios" (Aug '77 DRIVER). I have just returned from a two-week trip to Guadalajara, Mexico, where I drove and took my CB radio with me. At the Mexican border, I asked about the use of the CB radio while in Mexico and I was informed by Mexican border officials that I could take the radio into Mexico but that I was not permitted to use it. I was also informed that as far as they knew, a license would have to be issued by the FCC of Mexico to grant authority for its use. They indicated that if I were caught using the CB radio, I would lose the radio and a fine would be imposed. I hope this information will help persons who are contemplating trips into Mexico and are planning to take their CB radios.

Hopefully, very soon, Mexico will publish and distribute clear guidelines to all border crossings on the taking and use of CB radios. In any case, the roads are excellent, the people, as always, are very friendly and eager to assist if help is needed. Good common sense will result in a very enjoyable trip South of the Border.

Capt Jose R. Vera, USAF
HQ SAC/LGSMY
Offutt AFB, NE 68113

Thanks for sharing your experience with CB radios in Mexico. Readers, be alerted. Despite the official announcement to the contrary, you may have trouble using your CB radios.

FIREBACK

LETTERS TO THE READER

"BACKYARD MECHANIC" REPRINTS

In mid-December we were fortunate to obtain an additional supply of the "Backyard Mechanic" Vol I. If you previously requested a copy and were told we had no more, we're sorry. Just send us a postcard with your name and address. You can make a postcard out of a 3x5 file card if you like. *No phone requests please.*

We are *not* keeping a mailing list for future volumes, so please don't inquire about anything other than Vol I until you see an announcement that there is a second volume available.

Remember, postcards only, no letters or phone calls. DRIVER has a very small staff and receives a lot of other mail, which is great because we really want to hear from readers. But 40 or 50 letters and calls a day concerning the "Backyard Mechanic" doesn't leave us time for much else.

GIVING CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

The fine photographs which accompanied the article "Icycle Racing" in the September DRIVER were taken by SP5 Marcus J. Wilson of the Public Affairs Office, Fort Devens, Mass. We regret we did not have his name before the issue was published.

Address your letters to:
Editor
DRIVER Magazine
AFISC/SEDD
Norton AFB CA 92409

1

If you use jack stands or safety stands, be sure to place them on a hard, level surface. Consult your car's manual for approved support ateas, and be sure all tension is removed from the bumper jack and the weight of the car is resting on the stands before you attempt to do any work.

2

Metal or molded plastic ramps may be your best bet because they don't involve use of a jack. Be sure the set you purchase has a load range sufficient for the weight of your car, and that they have SEMA or Underwriters' Labs approval.

3

Use a spotter when you drive onto the ramps. At the store where the "buying ramps" picture was made, a young man walked in with a pair of ramps that were bent up like pretzels. It seems he tried to put his van on them without a spotter and had "miscalculated" slightly. Not only is he out the money he spent for ramps, but he could have easily punctured a tire or oil pan as well. And we don't even want to think about what would have happened if someone had been underneath the van when the ramps collapsed.

the RIGHT way

The incorrect or improper use of bumper jacks and jack stands continues to be a problem, with over 30 incidents recorded in 1976 alone. On the back cover of our August '77 issue, we showed you the WRONG way to use jacks and stands. Take a look at the pictures on this page to see the RIGHT way.